

Gardner-Webb University

## Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

---

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

---

4-7-2014

### **GWU Writing Center Offers Students Tips & Techniques to Enhance Literacy Skills**

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

---

# GWU Writing Center Offers Students Tips & Techniques to Enhance Literacy Skills

 [webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-writing-center-offers-students-tips-techniques-to-enhance-literacy-skills/](http://webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-writing-center-offers-students-tips-techniques-to-enhance-literacy-skills/)

Office of University Communications

April 7, 2014

## *Services Available for Both On-Campus and Distance Education Students*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Research papers and extensive end-of-term writing projects are higher education requirements of which students are aware long before they fill out their first college application. But what's one to do when that 20-page paper is due in two weeks and must be referenced in a format that is completely foreign to the student?

Dr. Jennifer Buckner,  
Writing Center Director

According to Gardner-Webb University Assistant Professor of English Dr. Jennifer Buckner, the answer is surprisingly simple. For help in a wide array of areas, that student should visit the GWU Writing Center, located in the Tucker Student Center. As the director of the Center, Buckner believes its services can improve a writer's skill no matter where they fall on the spectrum.

"A common misconception is that you only go to the GWU Writing Center if you can't write," Buckner shared. "That simply isn't true. Some students might be really talented performing in one genre, but then they have to move to another class with different rules about formality, headings, structure, and so forth. For instance, the science department doesn't want you to be poetic in your lab reports, but the English department likes some craft in what they read. Sometimes that is difficult for students to navigate, and the staff at the center is able to provide valuable assistance."

Since 2012, when the Center moved from its previous location in Craig Hall to the Tucker Student Center, officials have reported substantially larger numbers of people utilizing the services. "I knew we would have more traffic, but I did not realize that it would be that much more," Buckner reflected. "In the first month, we had a 30-percent increase in attendance! The staff is wholly committed to helping their peers, so they were thrilled with the increase."

With up to seven students workers—five undergraduate and two graduate students—the Center provides one-hour consultations in which clients can receive

GWU Writing Center Staff

guidance on getting started with their project, organizing a draft, documenting sources research, formatting according to a style guide, proofreading, style, and more.

“The most common misconception—and this is universal and not unique to Gardner-Webb—is that the Writing Center is a ‘fix-it’ center,” Buckner offered. “People believe you just take your paper in there, and we all have giant red ink pens and we mark all of the grammatical errors and then hand the paper back. That’s not at all what happens. I actually talk to the staff a lot about teaching, not fixing. The goal is not just to make that paper better, but to make that student a better writer, so they can transfer those skills to other writing situations.”

Open to all students—undergraduate, Degree Completion Program, graduate, on- and off-campus learners, native English speakers and those for whom English is a second language—the Center’s staff also represents a diversely educated group. “Just in the past two to three years, we’ve worked to emphasize that this is not just an ‘English majors’ center,” Buckner said. “We’ve had nursing, psychology, chemistry, biology, social sciences, Spanish, and English majors serve as student workers. That helps provide beneficial services to our students because these workers have been in these classes with these professors. They can say, ‘I took that class. This is the way you should write for that professor.’”

Each year, the number of off-campus students served through the GWU Writing Center has also increased. By using online programs and asynchronous communications, distance education students can access the staff by appointment as well. Staff members use programs to share information from desktop-to-desktop, and then offer feedback and assistance. Buckner is looking for additional ways to utilize technology to enhance accessibility for non-traditional students. “I’ve been mulling several ‘out of the box’ solutions for the writing center,” she shared. “Any technology we adopt has to be simple and accessible to individuals without sacrificing the quality of service.”

With consultations lasting one hour, and a maximum of six consultations in one week allowed per student, Buckner believes that great strides can be made in improving a client’s writing skills if they provide enough lead-time. “Consultants can share a variety of strategies and can offer advice about a wide range of writing situations and challenges,” Buckner declared. “Within those guidelines and with just two weeks, our staff can really provide some help with focus, organization, polish and style.”

*The GWU Writing Center is a free service for all students of the University. Located on the second level of Tucker Student Center in Room 237, specific hours of operation are posted online at [gardner-webb.edu/writingcenter](http://gardner-webb.edu/writingcenter). Students can make an appointment via WebbConnect or by calling (704) 406-4393 during operating hours.*

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.*